

SURF FISHING INFORMATION

Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

978-465-5753



A Refuge permit is required to fish on the ocean-front Refuge beach between sunset and sunrise and for vehicle access to the beach as well as walk for overnight fishing. A permit is not required for walk-on surf fishing during normal Refuge hours (sunrise to sunset). Fishing is permitted from the ocean-front Refuge beach and areas of Stage Island, and Nelson Island as described below. Permits are available from July - October 31 at the Refuge entrance gatehouse when staffed. Drive-on surf fishing begins September 1. NOTE: Because permit availability is contingent upon reopening of Refuge beach sections, these dates may vary.

Permits are at all times subject to discretionary revocation by the Refuge Manager.

Vehicle access to the Refuge beach is for fishing purposes only. Camping is NOT allowed on the beach or anywhere else on the Refuge.

PERMIT CATEGORIES:

- **Night Walk-on \$10.** Beach access by foot only. Vehicle parking restricted to Refuge lots. Allows for Overnight surf fishing. **Walk on permit holders MUST be actively fishing after normal Refuge hours. Permits MUST be with the permittee while on the beach.** Walk-on beach access is via six boardwalks leading from parking lots 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7 when they are open.
- **2-Night Drive-on \$ 50.** Beach access by 4-wheel drive vehicle. Two night stay followed by two nights off the beach. Permittees must leave the Refuge by **3 PM** following the second night and cannot return for the next two nights. (Example: vehicle arriving on Friday night must leave by 3pm on Sunday and could not drive back on the beach until Tuesday). **Permit holders MUST be actively fishing at all times when on the beach.** Drive-on permits are issued only to owners or immediate family members (spouse, children, parents) of conventional 4-wheel drive pickup trucks or sport-utility vehicles. **All-wheel drive vehicles (such as Subaru Outbacks/Foresters) do not qualify.** Permit holders must possess a valid state driver's license.

In addition to the permit fee, a Refuge entrance fee is charged (\$5/vehicle, \$2 walk-on/bicycle). Annual entrance passes are available.

SIGNING IN:

A Self Sign-in/Sign-out book is located at Lot 1. An air compressor station is also located there and available for drive on permit holders. **Every drive-on permit holder must sign in and out EACH time they go off the beach.** Vehicles may leave and return to the beach and Refuge during their two night period but their two-night stay will begin on the day of their first entry regardless of whether they stay the second night.

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:

Vehicles must have a valid state registration and inspection sticker and be equipped with the following items:

- (1) a shovel
- (2) a jack
- (3) board/jack support
- (4) inflated, standard-size tire
- (5) tire pressure gauge
- (6) Drive-on & walk-on applicants must possess a rod and reel for each person older than 13.
- (7) Tow rope

All permittees must carry the permit on or about their person. Permits are NOT transferable but do include all vehicle passengers. All permittee vehicles must display a valid permit decal (issued with the Refuge Use Permit) on the driver's side, lower corner of the windshield.

VEHICLE ACCESS:

Refuge entry is from sunrise to sunset. Vehicle beach access is ONLY via the following:

- North Beach Access (BB-1): 4 x 4 trail located .5 miles (.8 kilometers) south of entrance gatehouse (see map).
- South Beach Access (BB-2): 4 x 4 trail located 4.75 miles (7.6 kilometers) south of entrance gatehouse (see map).

Foot traffic is prohibited on these vehicle trails. Walk-on beach access is via six boardwalks leading from parking lots 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, & 7 when open.

NOTE: Vehicles are prohibited from driving NORTH of area BB-1 at any time (see map).

FISHING SEASON:

- **Night Walk-ons begin sometime in July upon partial Refuge beach reopening and continue through Oct 31.** Drive on permits are available at this time but can only be used as a Walk-ons until Sept 1.
- **September 1 through October 31:** overnight walk-on & overnight drive-on surf fishing permitted. Vehicle beach permitted all hours.

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS:

**** FIRES ARE PROHIBITED. ONLY GAS (PROPANE) COOKING FIRES ALLOWED.**

- Vehicle travel on the beach is permitted only on dry sand but must also be below the dunes, dune edges, wrack line & live vegetation. It is suggested tire pressure not exceed 15 psi. **The maximum vehicle speed limit on the beach is 10 mph.** Leaving a vehicle on the beach unattended is prohibited.

- Riding on a fender, roof, tailgate, open pickup bed, or any exterior portion of a vehicle is prohibited.
- Fires are prohibited. Only small contained gas (propane) cooking fires allowed.
- Erecting a tent is prohibited.
- Deep, vehicle-created ruts/holes must be immediately filled by those responsible.
- Rods/lines must be kept within 20 feet (6 meters) of the shoreline to avoid conflicts with other beach users.
- From sunset to sunrise each person 13 years of age or older must have surf fishing gear and be actively engaged in surf fishing while on the beach.
- All trash including charcoal must be packed out. Do not bury charcoal in the sand.

Nelson Island: fishing permitted Sundays year-round. Mondays-Saturdays generally from February-early September (check with Refuge Headquarters for exact dates). Foot access only. Night fishing prohibited.

Stage Island: fishing permitted year-round. Foot access only. Access to and from Stage Island by the way of Sandy Point State Reservation only. All persons must remain along the shore, access to upland areas prohibited. Night fishing prohibited.

**To minimize
disturbance
of foraging shorebirds,
drive with caution
on the beach.**

VEHICLE INSPECTION TIMES:

Vehicle inspections can be done Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm At Refuge Headquarters (6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, MA 01950) or at the Gatehouse when it is staffed.

.NOTE: Drive-on Acces Gates (BB-1 & BB-2) subject to temporary unannounced closure due to high tide and/or storms.